



# **Out of Brownsville: Encounters with Nobel Laureates and Other Jewish Writers-A Cultural Memoir**

*Jules Chametzky*

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## **Out of Brownsville: Encounters with Nobel Laureates and Other Jewish Writers-A Cultural Memoir**

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In this volume, Jules Chametzky has gathered his very personable stories and reminiscences of some of the many writers he has met or known—as he writes, “some fleetingly, a few more intensely”—over the course of his more than half a century in the business of reading, writing, and talking about literature, of teaching and editing. Not only do those writers emerge as the complicated and fascinating human beings they are, but we also come to know Jules himself, a warm and gracious storyteller. Praise for *Out of Brownsville: NO STUDENT* of American Jewish writing needs to be reminded that Jules Chametzky is one of its pioneers. A founding editor of the influential *Massachusetts Review*, he is perhaps especially noted for his study of the fiction of Abraham Cahan. He now caps a distinguished career as critic, editor, and teacher with this delightful volume of memoirs. It is astonishing to know how many of the shapers of literature in America Chametzky knew not merely as subjects met in passing but understood as artists. Readers and scholars will, of course, find their own favorites among the individual memoirs, but beyond the perceptiveness of the recollections and the shrewd assessments in them, there emerges Jules himself, warm, gracious, accepting, modest about his own achievements, which he scarcely mentions. One closes the book with a sense of regret that it has ended and with a feeling how good it was for those who met Jules and enjoyed, however briefly, his friendship. — Joseph C. Landis, Editor, *Yiddish-Modern Jewish Studies*, Professor Emeritus of English, Queens College, CUNY *WOVEN INTO* these lively portraits and reminiscences of others are not only sudden illuminations of the characters portrayed and of the fleeting moments captured here, but also insights into the fragility of life, the power to create, and the strange magic of human encounters that make Jules Chametzky’s memoir so touchingly social and pleasurable to read. — Werner Sollors, Henry B. and Anne M. Cabot Professor of English Literature and Professor of African and African American Studies, Harvard University *LEGENDARY EDITOR* Jules Chametzky’s book is autobiography at its cleanest: one’s life through the eyes of others. His astute, personable dispatches are a map of Jewish intellectual trends in the United States in the second half of the twentieth century. — Ilan Stavans, Lewis-Sebring Professor in Latin American and Latino Culture (Spanish), Amherst College *ACCORDING TO* the Jewish Midrash, the Book and the Sword came wrapped together, with a message: “Regard what is written in the book, or be delivered to the sword.” Jules Chametzky’s love of books and their very human creators is expressed in this cultural memoir with affection and marvelous charm, yet there is also a tone of urgency, from a man who has dedicated his life to keeping the book open and the sword sheathed. — Lawrence Bush, Editor, *Jewish Currents* *About the Author:* Jules Chametzky is Professor of English, emeritus, at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where he taught from 1958 until 2004. He was a founder of *The Massachusetts Review*, of which he is Editor, emeritus, after 27 years as senior co-Editor. Chametzky has published numerous articles and reviews on Jewish American and American literature in popular and academic journals. His major publications include *From the Ghetto: The Fiction of Abraham Cahan*; *Our Decentralized Literature: Cultural Mediations in Selected Jewish and Southern Writers*; the Penguin edition of Abraham Cahan’s *The Rise of David Levinsky*. He co-edited *Black and White in American Culture: Ten Years of The Massachusetts Review*; and *Jewish American Literature: A Norton Anthology*. Chametzky is the father of three sons and was married for 52 years to the late poet Anne Halley.

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